

## PINE NEEDLE PAINTBRUSHES

Create your own art-making tools with natural materials!

### GATHER THESE MATERIALS

- A handful of pine needles (green or brown)
- A stick, 3-6 inches long
- Paper, cardboard, or another surface to paint on
- Paint
- Rubber band, string, yarn or tape
- *Optional:* scissors



### INSTRUCTIONS

**Step 1:** Go outside to find a handful of pine needles and a stick. Gather the other materials.

**Step 2:** Hold the pine needles together with the stick so that the pine needles stick out about half an inch past the end of the stick. Wrap a rubber band, string, yarn or tape to around the end of the stick that has the pine needles sticking out. Wrap it tightly to hold the pine needles in place. Now you have a paint brush! If you would like the end of the needles to be the same height, you can trim them with scissors.



**Step 3:** Try using your paint brush on paper, cardboard, or another surface you can paint on.

## EXPERIMENT

- Try using a bundle of pine needles without attaching it to a stick. Which method works better for you?
- Try making one brush with fresh, green pine needles and another brush with dried, brown pine needles. Can you tell the difference when you use them?
- Try cutting the ends of the pine needles with scissors. How does the brush work when the needles are longer? What happens when they are shorter?
- What else can you use as a paintbrush? Try using sticks, pine cones, leaves, or any other objects you find outside.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The leaves of a pine tree are called needles because of their shape. Pine needles attach to the twig in bundles called **fascicles**. Each fascicle has a small sheath at the base that bundles the needles together.

The number of needles per fascicle can be a clue about the type of pine tree it comes from. For example, white pines have 5 needles per fascicle and loblolly pines usually have 3. Sometimes the number can vary. On a shortleaf pine, there can be 2 or 3 needles per fascicle.

The length of a pine needle can be another clue to help identify the tree. Shortleaf pine needles are usually between 3-5 inches long. Longleaf pines tend to have 3 or sometimes 4 needles per fascicle, and as the name suggests, the needles are much longer. They can be 8-18 inches long!